

(1) Section 2 shall become effective on October 1, 1977, or on such enactment date, whichever is later; and

(2) The amendments made by section 1(a) shall apply retroactively to deny benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, except that, notwithstanding any other provision of law.

(A) With respect to any person who, on such enactment date is receiving benefits under laws administered by the Veterans' Administration, (i) such benefits shall not be terminated under paragraph (2) of section 3103(e) of title 38, United States Code, as added by section 1(a)(2) of this Act, until, (I) the day on which a final determination not favorable to the person concerned is made on an expedited basis under paragraph (2) of such section 3103(e), (II) the day following the expiration of ninety days after a preliminary determination not favorable to such person is made under such paragraph, or (III) the day following the expiration of one hundred and eighty days after such enactment date, whichever day is the earliest, and (ii) the United States shall not make any claim to recover the value of any benefits provided to such person prior to such earliest day;

(B) With respect to any person awarded a general or honorable discharge under revised standards for the review of discharges referred to in clause (A) (i), (ii), or (iii) of such paragraph who has been provided any such benefits prior to such enactment date, the United States shall not make any claim to recover the value of any benefits so provided; and

(C) The amendments made by clause (1) of section 1(a) shall apply, (i) retroactively only to persons awarded general or honorable discharges under such revised standards and to persons who, prior to the date of enactment of this Act, had not attained general eligibility to such benefits by virtue of (I) a change in or new issuance of a discharge under section 1553 of title 10, United States Code, or (II) any other provision of law, and (ii) prospectively (on and after such enactment date) to all other persons.

PART 725—RELEASE OF OFFICIAL INFORMATION FOR LITIGATION PURPOSES AND TESTIMONY BY DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY PERSONNEL

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 301; 10 U.S.C. 113, 5013; 31 U.S.C. 9701 and 32 CFR part 97.

SOURCE: 57 FR 2463, Jan. 22, 1992, unless otherwise noted.

§ 725.1 Purpose.

This instruction implements 32 CFR part 97 regarding the release of official Department of the Navy (DON) information and provision of testimony by DON personnel for litigation purposes, and prescribes conduct of DON personnel in response to a litigation request or demand. It restates the information contained in Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5820.8A of 27 August 1991¹, and is intended to conform in all respects with the requirements of that instruction.

§ 725.2 Policy.

(a) It is DON policy that official factual information, both testimonial and documentary, should be made reasonably available for use in Federal courts, state courts, foreign courts, and other governmental proceedings unless that information is classified, privileged, or otherwise protected from public disclosure.

(b) DON personnel, as defined in § 725.4(b), however, shall not provide such official information, testimony, or documents, submit to interview, or permit a view or visit, without the authorization required by this part.

(c) DON personnel shall not provide, with or without compensation, opinion or expert testimony concerning official DON or Department of Defense (DOD) information, subjects, personnel, or activities, except on behalf of the United States or a party represented by the Department of Justice, or with the written special authorization required by this part.

(d) Section 725.2(b) and (c) constitute a regulatory general order, applicable to all DON personnel individually, and

¹ Copies may be obtained, if needed, from the Naval Publications and Forms Directorate, Attn: Code 301, 5801 Tabor Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19120-5099.

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need no further implementation. A violation of those provisions is punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for military personnel and is the basis for appropriate administrative procedures with respect to civilian employees. Moreover, violations of this instruction by DON personnel may, under certain circumstances, be actionable under 18 U.S.C. 207.

(e) Upon a showing by a requester of exceptional need or unique circumstances, and that the anticipated testimony will not be adverse to the interests of the DON, DOD, or the United States, the General Counsel of the Navy, the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, or their respective delegates may, in their sole discretion, and pursuant to the guidance contained in this instruction, grant such written special authorization for DON personnel to appear and testify as expert or opinion witnesses at no expense to the United States.

§ 725.3 Authority to act.

(a) The General Counsel of the Navy, the Judge Advocate General of the Navy, and their respective delegates [hereafter “determining authorities”] described in § 725.4(a), shall respond to litigation requests or demands for official DOD information or testimony by DON personnel as witnesses.

(b) If required by the scope of their respective delegations, determining authorities’ responses may include: consultation and coordination with the Department of Justice or the appropriate United States Attorney as required; referral of matters proprietary to another DOD component to that component; determination whether official information originated by the Navy may be released in litigation; and determination whether DOD personnel assigned to or affiliated with the Navy may be interviewed, contacted, or used as witnesses concerning official DOD information or as expert or opinion witnesses. Following coordination with the appropriate commander, a response may further include whether installations, facilities, ships, or aircraft may be visited or inspected; what, if any, conditions will be imposed upon any release, interview, contact, testimony, visit, or inspection; what, if any, fees

shall be charged or waived for access under the fee assessment considerations set forth in § 725.11; and what, if any, claims of privilege, pursuant to this instruction, may be invoked before any tribunal.

§ 725.4 Definitions.

(a) *Determining authority.* The cognizant DON or DOD official designated to grant or deny a litigation request. In all cases in which the United States is, or might reasonably become, a party, or in which expert testimony is requested, the Judge Advocate General or the General Counsel of the Navy, depending on the subject matter of the request, will act as determining authority. In all other cases, the responsibility to act as determining authority has been delegated to all officers exercising general court-martial convening authority, or to their subordinate commands, and to other commands and activities indicated in § 725.6.

(b) *DON personnel.* Active duty and former military personnel of the naval service including retirees; personnel of other DOD components serving with a DON component; Naval Academy midshipmen; present and former civilian employees of the DON including non-appropriated fund activity employees; non-U.S. nationals performing services overseas for the DON under provisions of status of forces agreements; and other specific individuals or entities hired through contractual agreements by or on behalf of DON, or performing services under such agreements for DON (e.g., consultants, contractors and their employees and personnel).

(c) *Factual and expert or opinion testimony.* DON policy favors disclosure of factual information if disclosure does not violate the criteria stated in § 725.8. The distinction between factual matters, and expert or opinion matters (where DON policy favors non-disclosure), is not always clear. The considerations set forth below pertain.

(1) Naval personnel may merely be percipient witnesses to an incident, in which event their testimony would be purely factual. On the other hand, they may be involved with the matter only